

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

HELAYNE SEIDMAN,

Plaintiff,

- against -

COMICBOOK.COM, LLC

Defendant.

Docket No. 1:17-cv-6762

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

COMPLAINT

Plaintiff Helayne Seidman (“Seidman” or “Plaintiff”), by and through her undersigned counsel, as and for her Complaint against Defendant ComicBook.com, LLC (“Comic” or “Defendant”) hereby alleges as follows:

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This is an action for copyright infringement under Section 501 of the Copyright Act. This action arises out of Defendant’s unauthorized reproduction and public display of a copyrighted photograph of Suzanne Mendonca, a former contestant on The Biggest Loser, owned and registered by Seidman, a New York City-based photojournalist. Accordingly, Seidman seeks monetary relief under the Copyright Act of the United States, as amended, 17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seq.*

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This claim arises under the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seq.* This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1338(a).

3. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because Defendant is transacting business in New York.

4. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b).

PARTIES

5. Seidman is a professional photojournalist in the business of licensing her photographs to online and print media for a fee, having a usual place of business at 16 St. Marks Place, Apt. 4B, New York, New York 10003.

6. Upon information and belief, Comic is a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Tennessee, with a place of business at 6 Cadillac Drive, Suite 280, Brentwood, TN 37027. At all times material hereto, Comic has owned and operated a website at the URL: www.PopCulture.com (the “Website”).

STATEMENT OF FACTS

A. Background and Plaintiff’s Ownership of the Photograph

7. Seidman photographed Suzanne Mendonca, a former contestant on The Biggest Loser (the “Photograph”). A true and correct copy of the Photograph is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

8. Seidman is the author of the Photograph and has at all times been the sole owner of all right, title and interest in and to the Photograph, including the copyright thereto.

9. The Photograph was registered with the United States Copyright Office and was given Copyright Registration Number VA 2-006-115.

B. Defendant’s Infringing Activities

10. Upon information and belief, on July 28, 2017, Comic ran an article on the Website entitled *Are ‘The Biggest Loser’s Low-Car, Low-Fat Diets All Hype?* See

<http://popculture.com/2017/07/27/biggest-loser-controversial-weight-loss-diets/> The article prominently featured the Photograph. A true and correct copy of the article is attached hereto as Exhibit B.

11. Comic did not license the Photograph from Plaintiff for its article, nor did Comic have Plaintiff's permission or consent to publish the Photograph on its Website.

CLAIM FOR RELIEF
(COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT AGAINST COMIC)
(17 U.S.C. §§ 106, 501)

12. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each and every allegation contained in Paragraphs 1-11 above.

13. Comic infringed Plaintiff's copyright in the Photograph by reproducing and publicly displaying the Photograph on the Website. Comic is not, and has never been, licensed or otherwise authorized to reproduce, publicly display, distribute and/or use the Photograph.

14. The acts of Defendant complained of herein constitute infringement of Plaintiff's copyright and exclusive rights under copyright in violation of Sections 106 and 501 of the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. §§ 106 and 501.

15. Upon information and belief, the foregoing acts of infringement by Comic have been willful, intentional, and purposeful, in disregard of and indifference to Plaintiff's rights.

16. As a direct and proximate cause of the infringement by the Defendant of Plaintiff's copyright and exclusive rights under copyright, Plaintiff is entitled to recover her damages and Defendant's profits pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(b) for the infringement.

17. Alternatively, Plaintiff is entitled to statutory damages up to \$150,000 per work infringed for Defendant's willful infringement of the Photograph, pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(c).

18. Plaintiff further is entitled to her attorney's fees and full costs pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests judgment as follows:

1. That Defendant Comic be adjudged to have infringed upon Plaintiff's copyrights in the Photograph in violation of 17 U.S.C §§ 106 and 501;
2. That Plaintiff be awarded either: a) Plaintiff's actual damages and Defendant's profits, gains or advantages of any kind attributable to Defendant's infringement of Plaintiff's Photograph; or b) alternatively, statutory damages of up to \$150,000 per copyrighted work infringed pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504;
3. That Defendant be required to account for all profits, income, receipts, or other benefits derived by Defendant as a result of its unlawful conduct;
4. That Plaintiff be awarded her costs, expenses and attorneys' fees pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505;
5. That Plaintiff be awarded pre-judgment interest; and
6. Such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable in accordance with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 38(b).

Dated: Valley Stream, New York
September 5, 2017

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